

STORY 73.

THE LETTER OF SUFYAN SAURI TO HARUN.

PUNGENT CRITICISM OF THE ADMINISTRATION.

HARUN and Sufyan used to be friends in their childhood. When Harun became Caliph he wrote to Sufyan the following epistle, "Dear Brother Sufyan! You know that Muslims are all brothers. So our relations are the same as they used to be in our young days. I am sorry to note that where as on my ascending the throne of the Khilafat all my friends and well-wishers have come to congratulate me and received from me valuable gifts, you alone have not come. I would have come in person but it would have been derogatory to the dignity of the Khilafat."

Sufyan wrote back in reply, "From Sufyan the humble servant of God to Harun-ul-Rashid who is enamoured of power and wealth. You have admitted in your letter that you have spent public money in giving valuable gifts to your friends. This is enough to condemn you on the day of judgement. Not being contented with this you wish that on that day I should be a witness of your criminal extravagance which I shall have to be if I accept your gifts. Harun! You have to be prepared to answer for these things before the throne of the Almighty. You sit on a throne. You wear silk. You place sentinels at the door

of your palace. Your officials themselves indulge in drinking but punish the drunkards, themselves commit adultery but punish the adulterers, themselves commit theft, but punish the thieves and all for this you shall be held responsible on the last day.

"I have done my duty as a friend. Please do not write to me any more letters."

The so-called Caliphs of Bhagdad had departed from the example of the Prophet and the first four Caliphs. They had fallen victims to the evil influences of the Persian and Roman despots but there were still men like Sufyan, Sauri and Fuzail who were true exponents of Islam and reminded them of the Islamic ideals of Government.